

On page 14 above line 1, insert --We claim:--

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Amend claim 1-7, cancel claim 8, add new claims 9-14.

1. (Currently Amended) A process ~~Process~~ for the preparation of hydrogen and a gas containing a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide ~~containing gas~~ from methane, said process comprising: ~~by performing the following steps:~~
 - (a) partially oxidizing methane via a non-catalyzed reaction to prepare an effluent comprising ~~preparing~~ a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide having a temperature of above 700°C ~~by means of a non-catalyzed partial oxidation of the methane and oxygen;~~
 - (b) ~~catalytic~~ catalytically steam reforming the methane feedstock in a ~~Convective Steam-Reformer~~ convective steam reformer zone to prepare a steam reforming product having a hydrogen to carbon monoxide molar ratio of greater than 2, wherein the required heat for the steam reforming reaction is provided by convective heat exchange between the steam reformer reactor zone and the effluent of step (a) ~~to obtain as separate products a steam reforming product having a hydrogen to CO molar ratio of greater than 2 and a cooled effluent of step (a), and~~
 - (c) separating hydrogen from all or part of the steam reforming product.
2. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process according to~~ claim 1, wherein the steam reforming product has a hydrogen to ~~CO~~ carbon monoxide molar ratio of between 3 and 6.
3. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process according to any one of claims 1-2,~~ wherein hydrogen is ~~isolated~~ separated by membrane separation, by a pressure swing absorber step or by a membrane separation followed by a pressure swing absorber step.
4. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process according to any one of claims 1-3,~~ wherein in step (c) hydrogen is separated ~~only~~ from a part of the steam reforming product to produce a remainder part and that the remainder part of the steam reforming

product, and the cooled effluent of step (a) as obtained in step (b) is combined after having supplied heat to the steam reforming reactor zone in step (b).

5. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process according to any one~~ of claims 1-3, wherein in step (c) hydrogen is separated only from a part of the steam reforming product to produce a remainder part and that the remainder part of the steam reforming product is fed to step (a).

6. (Currently Amended) The process of ~~Process according to claim 5~~, wherein the remainder part of the steam reforming product is fed to step (a) such that this stream is mixed with the effluent of the partial oxidation such that the temperature of the effluent of the partial oxidation is reduced in temperature by between 250°C and 500°C.

7. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process according to any one of claims~~ ~~Process according to any one of claims 1-6~~, wherein the convective steam reformer zone comprises of a tubular reactor provided with one or more tubes containing a reforming catalyst.

8. Cancel.

9. (New) The process of claim 1 further comprising:

- (d) catalytically converting the hydrogen and carbon monoxide into a stream comprising hydrocarbons via a Fischer-Tropsch process.

10. (New) The process of claim 9 further comprising:

- (e) separating the stream of step (d) into a hydrocarbon product and a gaseous recycle stream wherein the gaseous recycle stream is fed to step (a) or step (b).

11. (New) The process of claim 10 further comprising:

- (f) hydroconverting the hydrocarbon product of step (e) with the hydrogen from step (c).

12. (New) The process of claim 11 wherein step (f) comprises hydrogenation.
13. (New) The process of claim 11 wherein step (f) comprises hydroisomerization.
14. (New) The process of step 11 wherein step (f) comprises catalytic dewaxing.